ABSTRACT

A system that identifies functionally equivalent components and aggregates orders with functionally equivalent components from multiple buyers to create an on-line auction. The system includes private client catalogs, a generic component specification, a stock keeping unit (SKU) neutral catalog, an auction, a integrated supplier, a public catalog, and a list of suppliers and their associated products as identified by unique supplier-generated functional part numbers. Buyers, in the system, use the private client catalogs to purchase components from suppliers. When an order is placed into the private catalog, a generic component specification is generated for each component in order to identify functionally equivalent components. Thereafter, a SKU neutral number is assigned to all functionally equivalent components. The system identifies all functionally equivalent components in the SKU neutral catalog by their SKU neutral number. At a predetermined time, aggregated orders are generated by combining multiple orders with the same SKU neutral number and suppliers of those functionally equivalent components in the aggregated orders are invited to the auction. After the auction, the integrated supplier manages the components and delivers them to the buyers at an appropriate time. The inventive system therefore creates a strategically timed market that is favorable to buyers by creating an auction with aggregated components from multiple buyers.